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ABSTRACT

This study on evaluation of university supervisors of student teachers is based on the work of Lee Goldsberry (1989). Goldsberry describes different roles that student teacher supervisors can take, focusing on the function of supervision itself. One of these roles has, as a primary purpose, maintaining a facade that supervision is being practiced. A second view assumes that the supervisor needs to correct deficiencies in teaching, and has as a primary purpose finding these flaws and correcting them. The final view is based on the idea that teachers need skilled support to refine their own efforts, and has as its primary purpose the stimulation of guided reflection based upon what the student teacher knows about teaching. An instrument for evaluating college supervisors' supervision of student teaching, and a list of three references are appended. (JD)

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Evaluation of University Supervisors of Student Teachers

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Evaluation of University Supervisors
of Student Teachers

This study on evaluation of university supervisors of student teachers is based on the work of Lee Goldsberry (1989). Goldsberry describes different roles that student teacher supervisors can take, focusing on the function of supervision itself. One of these roles has, as a primary purpose, maintaining a facade that supervision is being practiced. A second view assumes that the supervisor needs to correct deficiencies in teaching, and has as a primary purpose finding these flaws and correcting them. The final view is based on the idea that teachers need skilled support to refine their own efforts, and has as its primary purpose, the stimulation of guided reflection based upon what the student teacher knows about teaching.

Nominal supervision is supervision in name only. In this type of supervision, no serious attempt is made to improve the teaching performance of the student teacher. The reasons for this may be: 1) the supervisor may be ill-prepared for the job through lack of preparation for the level or subject area being supervised; 2) she/he may lack counseling skills needed to work with the student teacher and/or the cooperating teacher; 3) the university supervisor may have time or distance constraints that

do not allow for optimum supervision: or 4) supervision of student teachers may be a required behavior in which the university supervisor has no interest or concern. Whatever the reasons, this is often the type of supervision afforded our student teachers in this most important of pre-teaching experiences.

A second type of supervision is called prescriptive supervision. The goal of prescriptive supervision is to identify the aspects of teaching which can be improved, and to direct the improvement effort. Most state regulations addressing supervision prescribe prescriptive approaches. When problems are detected, the supervisor's job is to prescribe treatment. If problems are solved, nothing more is done until another problem arises. If the problem is not solved, the supervisor may call in other help, try alternate solutions, or simply wait it out. Since the approach is based on evaluation, it lends itself well to accountability more so than either of the other approaches to supervision. It is less time-consuming than the reflective method, as it requires no time allotted to "thinking", no preobservation conference, and no lengthy conference to counsel and/or guide the reflective process of the student teacher.

A third model of supervision, the reflective model, is based on the premise that we benefit most from an experience by preparing well for it, and then, reflecting back on it.

Reflection enables the student teacher to consider the purposes, procedures, and outcomes of a lesson as they might relate to ideas developed from formal study in methods courses. While this model of supervision is perhaps followed less often than the nominal or prescriptive models, it can offer a more lasting impact on future teachers.

The reflective model goes beyond the prescriptive model and focuses on the teacher's thinking about teaching as well as on actual teaching behaviors. A primary goal of reflective supervision is to help future teachers learn to evaluate their own teaching behaviors, and thereby, to become more effective teachers (Cruickshank, 1985). It encourages the student teacher to thoughtfully adapt strategies and techniques even when the supervisor isn't there to supervise.

Four procedural elements associated with refective supervision are: an espoused platform, shared control, hypothesis of effect, and planning conferences. The espoused platform is the expression of philosophy and an action plan which clarifies values as they relate to daily teaching practices. These personal ideals are linked to intended behaviors. In shared control, the supervisor can focus the student teacher's reflections on an assessment of the relationship among stated purposes, procedures, and learning outcomes. For example, "This introduction was obviously very successful. Why do you think it

was?" This type of reflection helps the student teacher to reexamine efforts that should prove useful when the supervisor is not available to help. Hypothesis of effect is the statement of the intended cause-effect relationship between the teacher's actions (stimulus) and the learner consequences (responses). An example of such an hypothesis might be: "If I increase the wait time after a learner's response, better and longer responses will occur." Formulating an hypothesis will help teachers better evaluate the success of the lesson. Reflective supervision helps the student teacher to learn to identify and to test their hypotheses. Pre-teaching planning conferences are often used by reflective supervisors to speculate on possible hypotheses, promoting deliberate thought about an issue both before and after a lesson is taught. The mission here is not simply to rate a performance, but to refine and improve it.

In order to be an effective supervisor fitting the reflective mode, one needs to have excellent organizational skills as well as the ability to guide critical consideration of the purposes, procedures, and consequences of teaching. Alternative goals and ideas might be explored along with an examination of the particular techniques and strategies being used as they affect learners. This exploration of ideas adds a richness to teaching, enabling good teachers to become even

better as they train themselves to reflect on the art of teaching.

Based on these three models of supervision, the researchers constructed a survey to be used by student teachers to evalutate their university supervisors. A copy of this survey appears in the appendix.

Results from the survey were used to categorize the university supervisors as primarily nominal, prescriptive, or reflective in their approach to supervision. These surveys were administered to 166 students at two universities in Louisisana.

Responses on the survey were assigned weights (1-3) depending on the particular question being asked. The responses to questions 1, 2, and 7 were assigned weights of A=1, B=2, C=3. All other questions were assigned weights of A=3, B=2, and C=1. Raw scores of questions 3, 7, and 11 were used to denote the nominal score for each student. A prescriptive score was obtained by adding the raw scores for questions 5, 8, 9, 13, and 15. A reflective score was obtained by using raw scores for questions 4, 6, 10, 12, and 14.

Reflective data are represented by "R", nominal data by "N", and prescriptive data by "P". Correlations between the three columns of data revealed: R vs. P = 0.816; R vs. N = 0.266; N vs. P = 0.270. This shows that a relatively high correlation between reflective and prescriptive data exists (0.816).

Correlations of the data by schools revealed some interesting differences.

Results were:

School 1	School 2
R vs. P = 0.774	R vs. P = 0.845
R vs. N = 0.158	R vs. N = 0.536
N vs. P = 0.207	N vs. P = 0.535

Although the prescriptive/reflective relationship was approximately the same for both institutions, the reflective/nominal and prescriptive/nominal comparisons yielded negative correlations for School 1 data and relatively high positive correlations for School 2 data. In order to see where the differences existed between the two groups, a chi square analysis was conducted for each of the fifteen questions. The chi square for each of the questions were:

1. 1.62	6. 7.38*	11. 16.86*
2. 60.86*	7. 4.00	12. 1.23
3. 42.81*	8. 3.81	13. 1.46
4. 2.76	9. 0.92	14. 0.54
5. 0.45	10. 1.41	15. 0.46

Differences at question 2 can be explained by different requirements at the two institutions. Questions 3 and 11 were both questions assigned weights that would classify them as

nominal questions. Contradictory responses to these questions may indicate that students did not understand the questions.

There does not appear to be any rationale for the difference that exists between responses of the two groups on question 6. Responses were closely related on the other questions.

Overall, the data collected indicate that the instrument was not sensitive enough to classify college supervisor practices as being either reflective or prescriptive. It may be that prescriptive activities are a prerequisite for reflective supervision and that differences in the pace of individual student progress may be the determining factor in the type of supervision supplied by the college supervisor.

A structured interview with individual student teachers could possibly give the researchers more insight into the development of more discriminating questionnaire items.

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Appendix

Select the choice that best fits a description of your college supervisor's supervision on your student teaching experience during the semester. Please make an "X" on the letter of your choice.

1. My college supervisor:
   A. Put in an appearance
   B. Gave me direct aid as needed
   C. Helped me to analyze and improve my skills

2. During the semester, he/she directly supervised my classroom teaching:
   A. Four times or fewer
   B. Five to seven times
   C. Eight times or more

3. Got his/her information about my teaching competence from the classroom teacher rather than through personal observation:
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Never

4. Looked at the reasoning behind procedures and prescriptions that I used to solve problems:
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Never

5. Involved both the cooperating teacher and myself in the discussion and solution of problems encountered in my teaching:
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Never

6. Conducted conferences in which each of us reflected on the evaluation of my teaching performance:
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Never

7. Got directly involved in the evaluation process:
   A. Always
   B. Only when there was a problem
   C. Never

8. Gave me positive reinforcement when specific problems were resolved:
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Never

9. Suggested alternative treatments when specific problems were not resolved:
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Never

10. Focused on my thinking about teaching as well as my teaching behaviors:
    A. Always
    B. Sometimes
    C. Never

11. Was concerned with classroom teaching practices and the supervision of the classroom teacher:
    A. Always
    B. Sometimes
    C. Never

12. Valued my uniqueness and that of my particular setting and students:
    A. Always
    B. Sometimes
    C. Never

13. Identified aspects of teaching which could be improved, and directed the improvement effort:
    A. Always
    B. Sometimes
    C. Never

14. Looked for insight into my beliefs and philosophy of teaching:
    A. Always
    B. Sometimes
    C. Never

15. Detected specific problems in my teaching strategies and prescribed treatment for me to follow:
    A. Always
    B. Sometimes
    C. Never